



# THE SAFETY CLAUSE

DCMC's FLIGHT OPERATIONS INTERNET NEWS LETTER, EDITION VIII  
November 1998

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**H**ello again. I realize many of you out there in safety land have given up on The Safety Clause. After all, this is the first edition we've had in the last six months. However, there is a very good reason for the delay. We've decided to disengage from the routine, standard, run-of-the-mill, Western societal paradigm of publishing every other month and have opted for a new paradigm of publishing whenever we bloody well feel like it. This new *and improved* schedule allows us to eliminate the stresses brought about by missing deadlines, all at no additional cost to you...the reader. It also allows us to use terms like "Western societal paradigm" twice during the introduction...again...at no additional cost to you.

We've come a long way since the last edition, over 14 billion miles just rotating around the sun...but that's not important right now. We've got a great deal of information to relate to you even though Major Paul Shevlin promised us two articles and we haven't seen hide nor hair of either

him or the articles. Not that I enjoy singling out Paul and picking on him, it's just that the other guy who owes us an article, LT Erik Waldron, separated from the Navy to avoid writing it and is therefore *technically* out of our jurisdiction (although, I still know where he lives and whether or not he has a cat).

YOU HAVE VOICE MAIL...



While you were away, opportunity knocked... *did not leave message*; Destiny called...*said, "would call back"*; Chance held a meeting...*will send minutes via email*; the Future beckoned... *mentioned something about Plastics?"*; and Mongol hoards swept over Asia...*wished you were there*.

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## FYI

-Lt Col John Heib

**W**e have a new Chief of Flight Operations. He's Colonel Michael J. Falvey. Col Falvey replaces Col Jim McNulty who has accepted a hardship assignment as the new Commander for DCMC Sunnyvale, CA. A real friend to Flight Ops, Col Falvey attended the Summer GFR course at Sikorsky...in

1996! He's spent the next two years wishing he was actually *in* Flight Ops. Well, be careful what your wish for...

**A** draft rewrite of the Tri-Service Agreement has been worked out by a PAT from the Business Process Board of the Joint Aeronautical Commanders Group (JACG). No word yet on when it will be signed. The most significant change is the inclusion of the Program Offices in our manning process if

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and when we have problems either filling an existing billet or establishing a new one. Once signed, the new Agreement will be placed on our web site. Additionally, we will start rewriting DLAM 8220.3, probably to be renamed DLAI 8220.3, once the new Agreement is in place.

**T**he Air Force has begun prioritizing its pilot billets. I'm sure you'll agree, normally "priority" and "pilots" are two words that go together very well, but not in this case. Here, it means staff pilot billets, like the one "yours truly" occupies, will be filled at only 75%. I'm not sure if this means they'll take back my left arm and leg, or whether I get every fourth day off. If it's the former knowing the Air Force, I'll get a new bionic arm and leg at \$10M a piece (adjusted for contractor cost overruns and inflation) which will, 1) increase already astronomical pilot unit costs, 2) allow all pilots to bench press a Buick, and 3) make that cool na-na-na-na-na sound whenever they're used.

It also means we have to ensure all our Air Force pilot billets are used effectively and are coded correctly. With that in mind, Major General Malishenko, has signed DCMC Tasking Memorandum 99-16, "Response to the Air Force Pilot Prioritization Plan." It tasks the District CFOs to ensure all DCMC pilots who are actively flying, occupy RPI 1 billets, or to re-code them so they will. RPI 1 billets are exempt from the plan. The 75% manning situation will also require greater cooperation between the District CFOs when it comes to billet distribution.

That's the good news. For those readers who have been living in a cave for the last six months, the bad news is we probably won't be able to enjoy the luxury of even 75% manning for very long. It's likely this figure

will be reduced to 50% or even 25% in the next year or so.

**S**peaking of Tasking Memorandums, I'll be writing another one for the General, soon...probably during that extra 25% of my day that I won't have eventually because I'll be making up for the work of the one-pilot-in-four we can't have anymore because of poor pilot manning decisions made during the first part of this decade, which when they were made, every pilot in the Air Force at the time went, "What the hey?", but did they listen to us...NO, they went ahead with their shortsighted decisions to deal with a very short term pilot surplus and now they're reaping the whirlwind...but I'm not bitter.

Where was I? Oh yes, Tasking Memorandums. The new one will deal with **AIRCRAFT DELIVERY PROCEDURES**. More specifically, those steps you take to prepare both the aircraft and the gaining unit. Until the memorandum comes out, you can do yourself a big favor by looking into your processes. Focus your review on,

- 1) Initial notification to the gaining unit (what the aircrew should expect, when, where, how, etc.)
- 2) Delivery aircrew support-- mission planning, aircrew briefings, and if necessary, billeting, transportation, etc.
- 3) Paperwork-- Are the aircraft forms up to Service standards? Have all applicable Service Bulletins been accomplished? Are there going to be any surprises with periodic maintenance or time critical/ urgent bulletins? And,
- 4) Aircrew education—Remember, just because you understand acquisition-speak, doesn't mean the delivery aircrew will. Ensure someone is available to answer questions like,

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“How come this thirty year old aircraft that came in here for an IFF mod doesn't look like a new?

**L**ieutenant Colonel Mike Clover, District East's CFO, recently sent me an email that announced the Air Force has just approved using an internet-based NOTAM system. Aircrews may access the following web site: <http://www.notams.jcs.mil>. He went on to state that this is just another “nail in the coffin” for Base Operations Snack Bars! Pretty soon you'll mission plan, weather brief, NOTAM check, and file from your aircraft's on-board computer. Of course, I know this hyperbole is far from reality. You'll actually be doing all this from your UAV console. Well...as long as we still get to wear our leather jackets...

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## CHIEFS' CORNER

### DEFENSE CONTRACT MANAGEMENT COMMAND

-Colonel Michael Falvey

**I** can't tell you how happy I am to have the opportunity to serve as the DCMC CFO. We have lots to do in the very near future and I look forward to working with all of the folks on the DCMC flight operations team.

I guess its appropriate to give you a little biographical information. I'm a navigator and all of my flight time is in KC and RC-135s. I spent ten years in SAC and then made a transition into acquisition through the USAF's Education With Industry program. After three years in various program offices at Hanscom AFB, I came to D.C. to work at HQ AFSC as a member of the IG team. AFSC was in the process of closing so I moved into the Pentagon where I worked for

a USAF PEO, and then in foreign military sales. I was fortunate to have the opportunity to serve as a commander at the USAF flight test detachment at E-Systems (now Raytheon) in Greenville, TX. I went to ICAF in 1995, and came to DCMC in 1996. I originally came here to work in Flight Ops, but the Commander at the time, Maj Gen Drewes, moved me into a contracting job right after I came back from the GFR course. I was thrilled to have the chance to come back to Flight Ops when Col McNulty received his assignment.

There will be many significant changes in how we do business in the very near future - more to follow. So, as we used to say in SAC, “Stand-by!”

### DISTRICT EAST

-Lt Col Mike Clover

### Life on the Eastern Front

**W**ell Autumn has arrived and with it the cool weather. But it still seems like only yesterday that the long hot days of Summer were upon us. Actually, it was just yesterday but you know what I'm talking about. I'm talking about **HOT! Real HOT!** I'm talking sun drenchin', sweat pourin', cotton dry in the mouth **SAHARA HOT!** What a Summer we had – lots of heat and heat lightning flashin' at dusk! You remember 'em...days so hot you'd pour a cold drink on ice, not so you can drink it, but just so you can hold it to your head. These hot and humid dog days of summer sometimes meant a time when people escaped the madness of the heat by breaking from their normal work routine. Often those “shortcuts” resulted in minor “scrapes” and “dents” both to the person and the machine. Too embarrassed to say

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anything, the "incident" was left unsaid and quickly forgotten.



A tragic example of what happens when you break from your routine... Fire Fighters scramble to deal with the catastrophic consequences after Lt Col Clover puts too many jalapeños in his "Nuclear JP8+100" entry in the District East Chili Cook-off.

I'm here to say that its high time we start "airing" our dirty laundry. Yes, you heard right. I'm advocating we "spread the word" so somebody else doesn't repeat the same mistake and learns from a valuable lesson. In plain and simple pilot talk, I'm saying tell us your "war" stories. In the Air Force, flying units hold gatherings called "hangar flying" sessions where senior aviators pass along advice from their past experiences. The hope is that the "junior" warriors will learn from this sage counsel and won't repeat a similar mistake. In the Safety channels, the Air Force also reports items called High Accident Potential (HAP) Events. These HAPS are significant aircraft, missile, space, explosives, miscellaneous air operations, or ground occurrences with a high potential for causing injury, occupational illness, or damage if they recur. These events do not have reportable mishap costs. If they did, then the incident would be reported as a Class C or higher mishap.

The whole point here is improved **COMMUNICATION** throughout the year. Through honest and open communication, we'll save one another from graduating from the "school of hard knocks" this year and the next. You're probably all thinking: "He's been in the sun way too long" or "Easier said than done."

NEGATIVE!

A simple e-mail or message will help spread the word to everyone associated with Flight Operations and Specialized Safety. Now's not the time to retreat, but to take the offensive. Just remember there are two ways to get smart. One is through experience – we call this "the hard way." The other is to learn through others' experiences. The second method is much easier on our machines and bodies!

Stay cool, stay focused, stay #1!

Lt Col Mike "Mick" Clover

**Q**uestions from the Trenches. Frequently, I receive inquiries from those of you out in the real world. I generally save these to use later as blackmail...I mean, articles for later publication in the Safety Clause. And, occasionally I find myself having to answer "The Mail".

**W**aivers. DCMC Flight Ops doesn't approve waivers for the Joint Instruction, so we're talking about waivers to DLAM 8220.3 here. Recently, LCDR Mike Cerneck, the CFO for DCMC Sikorsky, had a problem with annual flight hour minimums for two of his pilots and asked his District CFO, Lt Col Mike Clover, for some advice on our (DCMC-OI's) unwritten policy on waivers. The email conversation went like this,



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LCDR Cerneck states, "We have 2 pilots that may not meet their annual flight hour minimums. "Pilot 1" is currently 7.9 hours short. He spent a significant amount of time medical down *DNIF* so *should* be eligible for prorated minimums. I think he can get the required time within the next 2 weeks to meet his minimums, so he may not be a problem.

"Pilot 2" is 16 hours short of the DLAM requirements. He has over 20 years of aviation service, so does meet the Navy's OPNAV 3710.7 minimums. With production rate and aircraft availability what it is, I don't think he will meet the DLAM flight hour minimums. Our intention, assuming he doesn't meet the DLAM minimums, is to send a waiver request to you.

Will a waiver fly? If a waiver is not acceptable, we could develop the "required training" to requalify the individual.

Flight hour proficiency minimums will be hard for us to meet in FY99. There are several large FMS contracts for Blackhawks that are being worked. If they materialize, we'll be quite busy and minimums will not be a problem, if not, Blackhawk flying will be scarce. Seahawk flying is likewise experiencing a lull, 4 aircraft in FY99, 18 in FY00 then going to 34/year. I anticipate 2 years of ongoing problems achieving our flight hour minimums. Of course if some of these FMS contracts materialize, we may have nothing to worry about. Any guidance?

*LCDR Cerneck's email has several excellent characteristics I wish to highlight. First, he asks for advice before the end of the semester rather than, "Hey, we didn't make our minimums last semester...Now what?" Secondly, he already has not only a plan for resolving the problem but is prepared to*

*"develop the required training" should it be necessary. And lastly, he gives his District CFO the big picture on the future. This additional information allows Lt Col Clover to respond with some guidance rather than additional questions. Lt Col Clover's response,*

- PLANNING ASSUMPTION: Both pilots are military.

-- Pilot #1: Prorate flight hour requirements as required.

-- Pilot #2: Recommend pursuing a waiver to 8220.3. Waiver approval authority is DCMC-OI. Route request to OI "through" DCMDE-OA. Discuss how this individual meets the Navy minimums, but falls short of DLA requirements. NOTE: OI closely scrutinizes all waiver requests. Ensure you include ways (i.e. added simulators) to mitigate the risk.



Here HQ personnel learn how to operate a new device we will be using soon to deal more directly *and decisively* with waiver requests.

Future Outlook: If flying time is scarce, consider reducing the number of aircrew personnel. You may elect not to fill any upcoming vacancies (people PCS'ing). If

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these aren't viable options, look at getting TDY funds from the Program Office to travel for extra simulators. Ferry aircraft whenever possible.

*The above Q&A is exactly how CFOs and GFRs should approach waivers. Ask early, have a plan, mitigate risk, and think in the long term.*

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## SAFETY NEWS

-CDR Mark Feallock

**T**ime for another input into the ol' *Safety Clause*. I've been in DCMC for a year, so I guess its time for some reflection on what I've learned. Well, the \$.70 cup of coffee at our snack bar is only \$.25 after 1:30 in the afternoon (notice the civilian influence that has me writing 1:30 in the afternoon instead of 1330), but, if you aren't at the coffee pot by 1:40, you're outta luck. Also, I found going to the Fitness Center around 13:45 is perfect, since nobody's there fighting over lockers. Oh well, on to more important things...

For me, learning is usually the result of some bad experience, call it "learning the hard way". Not long before I arrived at HQ, there was a fatal crash that occurred on a Friday going into a three day weekend. There were plenty of lessons learned from this mishap, many of which we are still resolving. I would strongly suggest that every flight operation review there mishap plan and contact any outside agencies (police, local fire, etc.) to ensure they are on the same sheet of music concerning site security and evidence preservation. Take a look inside your own organization to ensure you have a system for collecting your own information and are prepared for the tidal

wave of inquiries that will come following a mishap.



Joint operations like this C-17 carrier landing are virtually impossible without tremendous cooperation between the Services...*that and finding a galactically stupid GFR to approve the flight!*

Addressing a related issue, are you sure that all tech bulletins have been received for each airframe at your facility? Do they need to be complied with, or can they be delayed until the aircraft is delivered? Sounds cliché, but "you don't know what you don't know" in this case means, "do you have a system for verifying receipt of bulletins?" If an aircraft were to crash due to an item that needed to be changed in a bulletin, the excuse "We didn't get the bulletin." may not carry much weight with the Mishap Board. Make sure your facility has a method of verifying the most current changes.

Being at Headquarters doesn't make another issue any less difficult to deal with. Money. This is my first staff tour and I've heard complaints from those in the field (a reference to those of you actually doing work in DCMC) concerning budgets. Believe me, the budget isn't any less ambiguous here. I've found that not only does money have different colors, it tends to morph into different categories rather innocuously... "Well, we know technically

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it's training, but we're out of training money. However, we might have some money in the operating fund. Will that do?" You probably think it's tough to find money to attend a seminar... try planning one sometime, Buster! By the way, we're shooting for the second week in February for the APT Seminar in San Antonio; stand by for more information, I'll keep you posted as details become available.

Speaking of money, there seems to be a question about when to report a mishap. "If the contractor pays for the problem, do we still report it?" Well, of course it gets reported! Don't forget that the genuine purpose of a mishap reporting system is to get lessons learned out to other folks to prevent a similar incident from reoccurring. Another spin on this is delaying a report because you're waiting for estimates of a dollar figure for repair. Take for instance, that an aircraft gets doused by the hangar fire-fighting deluge system. To replace ALL the black boxes will cost approximately 600,00 dollars. Testing of these boxes will take 3-4 weeks or longer to determine which boxes will get replaced, so the mishap report gets withheld pending a dollar figure. News Flash...it doesn't matter. The problem was the deluge system inadvertently going off in the first place, so let's report *that* so that it doesn't happen again, hopefully. Reminds me of a certain fire we had on the *Kitty Hawk* in 1986...

Oh yeah, one of the first things I learned has turned out to be a real favorite not only for me but for you guys in field-land...Metrics. Combining money *and* fire probably won't take care this last one. As bad as many folks would want to burn the entire system, it ain't going away. You'd think that as much money is getting thrown at it, it would work better. Well, it will work better (someday),

but in the meantime we still have to deal with the system we have. Frankly, I like the old fashioned way...at least the averages keep getting better! If we can just sort out this excess sortie thingy...

Okay, that's about it. There were a lot of little things obviously that occurred during the year that were new to me, but these I've covered were the group that tends to get mentioned at least on a weekly basis. One of the most rewarding parts of this job has been meeting a lot of great people from different organizations, both civilian and military. The GFR courses are extremely successful, primarily due to John Heib's corporate knowledge (Editor's Note: Should also add comment about his natural good looks), though each class seemingly brings in its own facet of how to do business as well as personality. Since I always try to end with a parting comment, it would be "Know when to say when...", whether its an end of the month delivery schedule, annual quota or just going into a holiday weekend; make sure you stay focused on Safety. See ya, FLEA

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## AMM NEWS

-MSgt. Milton Dillard

I know it's been a while since our last "AMM Update", but we are back and a lot has happened in the last few months. For all of the new AMMs out there, and anyone else who is interested, this is the place to give you feedback and share information and lessons learned in the maintenance arena. It doesn't have to be a "War and Peace" novel or a Pulitzer Prize winner, just say what's on your mind. From some of the "inter-service" jokes that were told at the AMM course I should be getting a few responses from some of you. We won't single out any particular service, but I can still hear the phrases "row, row, row,

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your boat” and “Be all that you can be” in the same story line. Well I guess you had to be there.

### COURSE UPDATE

We just finished another AMM course at the Golden Sails in Long Beach. Just when we thought we had seen our best course offering, along comes this class. I know you have heard it before, but this definitely was our best ever. A group of seasoned instructors set the tone for the group of newcomers to the DCMC/AMM world. Special thanks to CMSgt Jerry Marshall and CMSgt Tom McCormick, this was Chief Marshall's last time instructing at our course. He will be moving on to retirement in February. Chief “Mack” will hopefully be around for one more AMM course. These guys will have sixty years of aircraft experience between the two of them when they retire. It's rumored Chief Mack's first assignment was at Kitty Hawk, NC, working for Orville and Wilbur, while Chief Marshall did an overseas stint in Paris with the Montgolfier Brothers working *Balloon Flight Ops* sometime around 1783, these guys have seen it all. They are the last of what we call our founding fathers for the AMM course. For you new AMMs out there, these guys can answer any question that you might have about your new position and the way we conduct business in DCMC. Pick their brains while you still have the chance.

Once again, MSgt Ross “Goldy” Goldstein did an outstanding job with the hotel and classroom arrangements. Thanks again Goldy, you did such a good job that we promoted you to Master Sergeant as of 1 November. Congratulations Goldy on a well-deserved promotion.

This class was also a learning experience for the instructors. The students enlightened us to new terms such as “you are giving me colon cancer”, “the baby is ugly”, “we need a pin boy”, and “Mac and Lou's place” and we can't forget “butt snorkeling”. What a class!



In this historic photo taken from the National Archives, CMSgt Jerry Marshall, checks for FOD on the runway at Kitty Hawk, NC.

Our next AMM course offering will be for April 19 – 23 at the Golden Sails in Long Beach, DCMC Boeing Long Beach will be our host. For anyone who would like to attend our course contact your district AMM CMSgt Herbert Rhay for West District, (310) 335-3673, DSN 972-3673, Mike Lathrop for East District, (617) 753-4078, DSN 955-4078, or SMSgt Mark Baumbusch for District International, (703) 767-2494, DSN 427-2494.

### NEWCOMERS TO DCMC

We have several new AMMs coming onboard; I would like to welcome all of you to DCMC.

MSgt John Hipple, GySgt Scott Mangis, CMSgt Kerry Smith, MSgt Thomas Duve, MSG Jose Munoz, MSgt Tom Danner, Mr. Louis Gentile, and last but not least CMSgt Herbert Rhay (AKA) “cone”.



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## A FAREWELL TO ARMs (AMMs)

In 1998 we welcomed new AMMs to DCMC and also said farewell to others moving on to retirement. AMMs moving on to retirement were CMSgt Kevan Penman, USAF, from West District Headquarters and CMSgt Jerry Marshall, USAF, Boeing Wichita. These guys were part of what we

call our "founding fathers" for the AMM course. Their contributions to the AMM program as instructors and subject matter experts helped to build and shape the AMM position we have today. We salute you both and wish you well in your future endeavors!

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## Flight Ops Guide to USAF GFR Officer Performance Reports Part 1...

--Lt Col John Heib

*(Note: Due to errors in the editing process, this article may also contain helpful advice for Airmen, Grunts, Squids, & Jarheads.)*

Throughout the years many GFRs have asked me for example Officer Performance Report (OPR) and Promotion Recommendation Form (PRF) lines that relate to what we do in DCMC Flight Ops. Of course, these GFRs wanted examples concerning the things we do here *other than* playing golf and surfing the web. Always willing to give career advice (particularly to those more successful than I), I've written many emails and actually did a briefing during one of our APT Training Seminars on this very subject. So that others can benefit from my (Editor's note: Add stock superlatives here from recent OPR before going final) efforts I've written this article; an accumulation of virtually everything I've learned over the past 19.75 years on OPRs. I'll follow up this article with one on PRFs next issue.

Promotion boards in the USAF (mission: "To Fly and Write, and Don't You Ever Fight It!"), seem to prize writing (some would say creative writing) skills, above all

else. This concept is not lost on your typical Air Force officer. In fact, it's interesting to note, that in all my years in DLA, I've never been asked for example lines for Army Officer Evaluation Reports; "Major Grunt ensures contractor pilots can do 500 sit-ups in under 10 minutes," or for Navy Fitness Reports; "LT Squid swims like a..." well, you get the picture. Of course, it could be that Army and Navy officers, while lost in thought on what they should put in a performance report, just refuse to stop and ask for directions.



**May 8, 1995- Because of his poorly written OPRs, Capt JP "Bones" Sousa is passed over for Major, despite his extraordinary feats as part of the USAF's elite dancing tuba troupe.**

Anyway, obviously OPR and PRF are Air Force officer report terms. However, I've noticed that as the years have gone by the other Services are starting to write their

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reports more and more like Air Force officer reports. The same goes for Air Force Enlisted Performance Reports (EPRs). This is, as you will no doubt recall, one of the ancient signs of the coming apocalypse. Regardless, because of this trend, most of the guidance that follows still applies universally with only minor modifications.

But enough beating around the bush. I present for your approval some thoughts on performance reports that will, at the very least, not kill any trees...unless, of course, you make a print copy.

***Writing PRFs and OPRs is an "art" not a "science!"***

***--Lt Col Mike Clover***

First, don't expect a lot of examples allowing you to just *change the names to protect the innocent*, and submit as your own. Example OPR/PRF lines are less useful than you'd think. No two performance reports should look alike anyway. The utility of example reports is limited to demonstrating a writing style only. Each line in an OPR/PRF should tell the promotion board how uniquely great *you* are, not how great a writer your boss is, or how great your thesaurus is. OPRs and PRFs should specifically tell the board, "This is what Capt Doe has done for us lately."

One of the most common questions I get from young officers is, "Should I write my own OPRs/PRFs?" The official USAF answer to this is, of course, "No. That's your supervisor's responsibility." BWAHA, HA, HA, HA! Sometimes I crack myself up. The real answer however is, "Well DUH!" or, more to the politically correct point, when your boss asks for inputs, nothing in the rules says you can't give him/her, as finished a product as you can.

Write your own. This is particularly important in a Joint Agency like DLA where your rater may be from a different Service. Col Mike Falvey (our new leader) likes to tell this story about a friend of his who had an Army Colonel as a rater. Having never written an Air Force Officer's OPR before he wasn't aware of some of the nuances involved in our reports. But, liking Col Falvey's friend, the Army Colonel tackled the OPR with typical grunt enthusiasm. He wrote, "Major Smith is in terrific physical shape and can run the mile and a half in under 8.5 minutes!" To which, most Army guys would add, "Huah!" Most Air Force guys, on the other hand, would remark, "I wonder what Major Smith will be doing after he gets passed over for Lt Col and leaves the service?"

I digress. Another reason for writing your own *draft* is, effective writing requires practice and lots of it. Initially, you'll only write one report per year. But, eventually, you'll be a supervisor, required to write several. You'll need lots of practice now, to avoid destroying a young officer's/airman's career due to the writing skills you neglected earlier in your career.

OPR Universal Guidelines. The basic guidelines for effective writing are pretty much the same for OPRs as they are for trip reports. They're just more important in an OPR. I'm not going to go over all of them in this article, so this is probably a good time to review the "Reports" article in The Safety Clause, Edition VII, for general writing tips.

**Spelling**, punctuation, and logic errors are deadly. Grammar is critical for OPR *paragraphs*, but you'll have some flexibility with grammar when using bullets. Bullets also allow tremendous flexibility with punctuation. Complete thoughts can be expressed with sentence fragments.

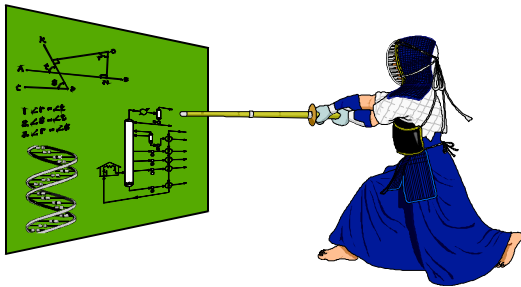
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Commas, dashes, ellipses, virgules (/), and semicolons can be used to join sentence fragments in ways that will baffle your computer's grammar checker. Needless to say, I'm a big proponent of bullet format. My last OPR and PRF consisted entirely of bullets. Major General Malishenko likes bullets also. Do we see a pattern emerging here?

**Avoid** DLA, GFR, or rated "technobabble" acronyms. Also, as a general rule acronyms, throughout the document, must be spelled-out at least once. The exception to this rule applies only to acronyms that *every* officer knows the meaning of, USAF, DoD, SOS, etc.

### **Lt Col Kendo takes desperate measures to edit DLA technobabble**



**Let's see... "Promulgated effective Acquisition Reform through MMR PROCAS of PLAS COGNOS providing fully integrated metrics MOUSE." "I'll Change metrics to Mickey...Excellent!"**

**Don't** try to be cute by layering supervision (*Assistant Deputy Chief* in a two person office). And don't use duty titles only an engineer would understand. Your PRF should not include comments about PME or advanced degree *completion* since boards already have that info. You can, however, comment on extraordinary achievement (PME DG).

**Don't** include performance on non-mission additional duties. Focus on the mission...DoD, Service, Unit. If what you did doesn't relate to the mission, who cares?

**R**ules and guidelines are all really nice, but you're probably saying, "My OPR is due tomorrow. What do I do? What do I do?" Well, your first step should be to write down everything you've done over the last year. Some officers maintain a journal throughout the year and write things down as they go along. These anal retentive officers suffer from an obsessive compulsive disorder which we won't get into here. For the rest of our readers, I suggest going through your computer files, including e-mail, word processing, presentation, spreadsheet, etc., documents. This should help remind you of the wonderful work you did nine months ago. True, it's too late now to brag about the article you failed to send me for publication in this newsletter, but you had to have done something noteworthy in your copious free time.

I'll discuss what to do with your list later. Step two is to start writing...the easy stuff first. Fill out the parts of the report that relate to facts unrelated to your performance, i.e., through Block III. Like the rest of the report they have to be perfect...spelling, punctuation, etc., but some of the information may not change from year to year, and most of it is provided for you. I mean, your parents gave you a name and the Government gave you a social security number. Getting this part done correctly allows you to ease into the OPR writing task.

Note: The *italicized* parts that follow are either my comments or phrases I wish to emphasis to you, the reader. You should

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probably leave them out of any reports you forward for your boss's approval.

Block II. Unit Mission Description. Usually, this is set in stone by the front office. Your only task here, is to ensure your OPR's version doesn't contain any of the universal guideline errors mentioned earlier.

Block III. Job Description. This should mirror your position description, updated with today's statistics. Important new writing rule for GFRs: Your reports should be written with your audience in mind. Write to ensure the promotion board understands that what you do or did, is important to the DoD *and* your parent Service. Generally, your job should be defined in operational terms as if it were a Wing/Fleet/Battalion job. *(As an aside, just as this edition went to print, we had a briefing with Gen Malishenko. He stressed the importance of ensuring your job description accurately reflects the level of responsibility you take on in DCMC. He agreed that our GFRs are performing duties normally performed at the squadron commander level. He also stressed the importance of writing using language and terms the Promotion Board will relate to and understand.)* Note how this example Job Description is written so that the non-GFR pilots on the promotion board can understand it (assuming the Naves on the board help them with the really big words).

Example: Selectively manned joint duty position. Responsible for management and execution of *flight operations and safety*, supporting 4 major new aircraft production and 9 aircraft modification facilities. Provides guidance and *leadership* to 321 military and civilian *aircrew members flying 120 aircraft*. The aircraft and people under his direction would constitute 2 *operational flying wings*

with 19 different aircraft including the F-18, C-17, and V-22. *(Note: three important aircraft representing each of the three Services and three different aircraft communities- fighter, heavy, and rotor-head)* Principle advisor to Commander for all aspects of *aircraft safety*. Oversees environmental impact of all District contracts. Interprets legislation and Federal Acquisition Regulations to implement policy. Performs duty on a Joint Staff IAW DoD Directive 1320.5.

Anybody notice how this example is not in bullet format? When I wrote this example, Block II and III bullets weren't quite as much in vogue as they are today. *My* current Block II and III are all bullets. It took me about an hour to convert them, but as a result, I was able to insert more information into the blocks and it improved the overall look of the reports.

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The remaining blocks should adhere to the following rules and guiding principles (that I conveniently stole...I mean borrowed from Lt Col Michael (AKA "Mick") Clover, DCMDE's Chief of Flight Operations, and Lt Col Dane (International man of mystery) Marolt, DCMDI's Chief.)

- OPRs below 0-4 level and below should stress depth (instructor, examiner, etc.)
- OPRs above 0-4 should stress breadth (GFR, CFO, etc.)
- OPRs at 0-4 should stress a little of each, depth and breadth.
- OPRs must stress leadership!
- Performance Reports (OPRs & PRFs) must be vividly written
  - "dynamic and enthusiastic" versus "dry and mediocre."
- Documentation of one's accomplishments is essential
- Always Write Right



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- Bullets (WHAT - HOW - IMPACT)
- Measurable (Quality/Quantity/Timely)
- Use Vivid Verbs (dazzle the reader and ignite the record)
- Active Voice
- State specific accomplishment
- Make clear tie to the mission
- Lead with strengths
- Show results.

Col Falvey's first OPR rule is quantify everything. No matter what you did, attach a number to it...e.g., dollars saved, manpower billets reduced, % improved, days/months early. Your contractor had no mishaps last year? So what! My mother didn't have any mishaps last year...tell it to someone who cares. What you really did was drop the Government's mishap liability from \$287M to \$Zero! And, how much faster did aircraft roll out the door because the contractor wasn't repairing what they used to break? Two weeks early? 20% early? Col Falvey's 1<sup>st</sup> OPR rule is not unbreakable. But, if MOST of your bullets don't have a quantifying number, the board members may start asking themselves, "So Capt Doe did a great job. And, you're telling me this because...?"

Still stuck? Try this technique out. Take the list of accomplishments you wrote out in step one and sit down with another officer and go over them. Do a Q&A on them. Who cares? What was the benefit? Where were the savings? Why did you bother? How are things better? When you answer these questions you're answering them for the promotion board.

The only other advice I can give you for adding meat to your OPR probably won't help you if yours is due anytime soon, but here it is anyway. If you know of a better way of doing something, write it down and pass it on. If you see a problem you can

fix...fix it, and pass on what you've done. If you do this right, others will follow your lead and you can say in your next OPR, - Developed new process for, I don't know...*operating the clicker while holding a beer in one hand and a slice of pizza in the other.* --Now S.O.P. throughout DCMC!" Cool eh? The point is, you can slough your way through your career doing what you're told and little else or you can take a little initiative and make things better. No one ever accused me of being a workaholic, and organized isn't in my vocabulary (I had to use the computer's thesaurus for this article), but if I see a problem I can fix, I fix it. I don't wait for guidance from above. I'd rather do it my way anyway. If others have the same problem I don't force them to reinvent the wheel. I get the word out. They may even improve on the program I initiated. OK...that's probably not going to happen, we are, after all, talking hypothetically here. Anyway, this is one of the best ways I know of making a difference, and it comes with the added bonus of helping you slug your way through the OPR writing process.

Block IV. Impact on Mission Accomplishment. I continue the use of bullet format for the remainder of the OPR. Bullets give you grammatical flexibility allowing you to cram a lot more information into a line while blowing syntax to the four winds. Word your bullets as you would write a classified add, with economical use of words; instead of A fast tracker...Fast tracker.

Important new performance report writing recommendation: Follow the "input and output" model for writing bullets, i.e., "what the officer did" and "what were the results". OK, it's more of a guideline than a rule, but promotion boards like results. Inputs and outputs are efficient methods for relaying

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them. This is what I'm talking about: input example (what you did), "-Led multi-service attack force against alien spacecraft," and output example (results), "--thwarted massive invasion, saved planet."

Because this is an OPR, not a PRF, *every* line in Block IV. must contain specifics. No fluff lines, and none of that, "outstanding in his field" stuff here. If you do have an "outstanding in his field" bullet, you better have a corresponding "50% increase in tomato production" bullet that goes along with it.

-*Input:* Led Tri-Service team developing new governing directive for all contractor flight and ground operations

--*Output:* Filled in gaps currently missing in many contractors' safety programs due to poorly written contracts

--*Output:* Improvements in operations expected to lower contract costs due to mishaps by 50%...over \$2 million per year!

--*Output:* Aligns contractor flight operations with higher Service standards, greatly reducing Government's risk

-*Input:* Led DLA Process Action Team developing a risk analysis program for aviation programs

--*Output:* Provides a simple process to determine risk level between aircraft contractors with dissimilar operations

--*Output:* Planned 20% reduction in travel budget now possible with targeted oversight of riskier operations.

-*Input:* Developed comprehensive safety plan preventing contract default on critical \$320 million contract

--*Output:* International contractor met major contract milestone only by adopting Capt XXX's program

-*Input:* Requested by-name to assist contractor in Tahiti after FAA decertified them as a repair facility

--*Output:* Teamed with FAA inspectors; conducted complete program scrub...calibration, back-shops, the works

--*Output:* Prevented \$200 million program loss; got aircraft out the door and back to the aircrews on time, on budget.

-*Input:* Perceptive; superb assessment identified critical deficiencies in two contractors' crash and rescue programs

--*Output:* *Essential Aircraft Rescue and Firefighting equipment/training now in place; risk mitigated at \$0 increased costs to Air Force.*

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Block VI Rater Overall Assessment. Unlike Block V., Block VII. can start and end with fluff lines; non-specific endorsements of the officer's overall qualities that can generally apply to any officer. Well written fluff lines are in high demand and can be purchased on the Black Market via the Internet for a nominal fee. One popular style is to have your rater rate you (Top 5% of all Majors, Best Capt in org). However, you should not make implied promotion recommendations (Capt Smith is filling a Major's billet).

In between the fluff you have to have meat. Don't repeat or just recycle what's in Block V.

- (*Typical fluff line*) Gifted, seasoned leader. Major XXX walks the fine line between protecting DoD aircraft and managing inherently hazardous yet necessary operations

-In close coordination with Tinker ALC, identified manufacturers qualified to provide spare parts to USAF C-5 PDM facility in Australia; eliminated backlog, & returned critical USAF assets back to wings on time! *This one bullet could have been rewritten as a primary and sub-bullet. However, using a*

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*semicolon to separate the "input" and "output" accomplishes the same thing and can be used when one of the bullets runs long. Also note, PDM must be spelled out program depot maintenance the first time it's used.*

*-Input:* Reputation for teaming with even difficult contractors to fix problems before they become mishaps.

*--Output:* District has enjoyed lowest aircraft mishap rate in DLA; only one ground mishap and no flight mishaps in the last two years!

*-Input:* Major XXX's Process Guide, Flt Ops Handbook, and On-The-Job Training Programs are now DLA standards

*--Output:* Guide so impressed CEO of ACME Corp., he directed its implementation company wide

*-Input:* Out-of-the-Box thinker; advanced ingenious recycling plan for 10M gals of toxic JP-5 fuel

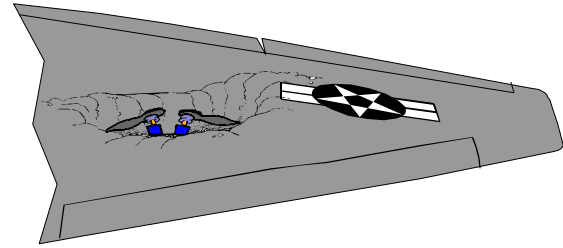
*--Output:* \$\$\$ *needed to dispose of contaminate waste turned into \$\$\$ saved; local community protected*

*-Input:* Identified serious problems on helicopter modification program in Mexico; teamed with program manager, contractor, and customer to identify and adopt alternatives

*--Output:* US Army helicopters are protected, program is proceeding, US Army aviation advanced, \$\$\$ saved!

Block VI. invariably ends with a fluff line. In fact, here's a perfect example of how, having a well intentioned rater from a different Service branch, who doesn't understand what's expected in a USAF OPR, can really destroy an officer's career. If your Block VI. doesn't have a school recommendation, they might as well mention your felony conviction.

**The problem with fluff lines is, they can apply to anyone...**



**- Top Ten Percenter on Fast Track, Major Payne made lasting impact on Wing**

Important new performance report writing rules: If your boss is not in the same Service branch you're in, always discuss Service specific wording with them to ensure it's not missing when the report goes final. Also, have someone from your Service review your input; they are your best source for Service specific editing input. Of course, it's always a good idea to have someone else edit your work. I always have as many fellow Air Force types look at my input as possible.

Block VI. fluff line examples:

-A true professional in every sense. A must for Senior Service School in residence.

-Selection as Deputy for Operations says it all! Performance in the top 1 percent of officers. SSS a must!

-Best Captain in District and top officer in my command. Unit's nominee for DSMC.

Negative examples:

-Developed a quality measure of aircraft from contractor facilities; identifies adverse trends, poor quality contractors, and aircraft system problems; measure is major leap in improving the quality of aircraft. *I have no idea what this means; neither will a promotion board. This must have been written when TQM was the buzzword of the*

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day. He uses "quality" three times in one sentence.

--Resolved issue of getting acquisition training for our enlisted aviation QARs; increasing their effectiveness while allowing us to reduce our civilian personnel presence in Liechtenstein and Lithuania.

*This would be an OK line if the Services were trying to put military personnel in civilians billets, not the other way around. Even if there is a good reason for doing so in these two countries, why would an Air Force board know about it. I do, however, applaud the use of "Liechtenstein and Lithuania" endorsements in an OPR.*

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Blocks VII. Additional Rater Overall Assessment and Block VIII. Reviewer. These blocks are virtually interchangeable content-wise. They should contain one or two main achievements followed by a fluff line. Examples:

-*Input:* One of our most knowledgeable and effective officers; instrumental in the successful V-22 Paris Air Show deployment

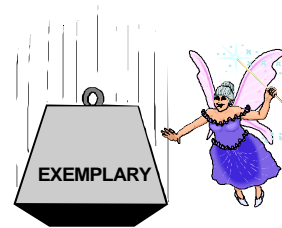
--*Output:* Joe's deft negotiations addressed the needs of all parties involved while still keeping them focused on protecting the aircraft. Good show! *In Air Force OPRs/PRFs it's OK to use the officer's first name. It's an implicit indication of the Commander's familiarity with the officer.*

-Lt Col XXX is the bedrock of operations: an outstanding performer who excels in all duties. Send to SSS! *Here, "SSS" stands for escaping tire air...no, no, no, it stands for Senior Service School, something all board officers are familiar with, so spelling out the acronym is not required.*

-Top performer; smart, effective, brilliant in ops/joint staff arena; SSS is a must; Sq/CC definitely next!

Lt Col Mick Clover also adds, "On the backside of OPRs, get "personal" -- relate how much the rater values/ appreciates the officer and WHY. You can even include additional duties and outside activities as evidence of attributes. Make clear recommendations for PME, command, future jobs!"

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**Wally's writer's block worries were over after the Performance Report Fairy Godmother (PRFG) subtly taps him with a magical superlative.**

Of course no self-respecting guide to performance reports would be complete without a superlatives list, so here are some: stellar, flawless, brilliant, rock solid, innovative, decisive, confident, perceptive, superb, diplomat, skillful, dynamic, seasoned, impeccable, golden, versatile, multi-talented, unparalleled, thinker, effective, ingenious, smart, incisive, articulate, savvy, charismatic, exemplary, polished, creative, pinnacle, epitomize, personify, analytical, well-versed, superstar,



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imaginative, winning. Army guys can probably add, warrior, fit, quick, trim and, of course...Huah! And, I guess Navy guys can add, buoyant, even keeled, able-bodied, seaworthy, shipshape, and square-rigged; they should probably avoid all references to tailhooks. Now, if I could only find a good euphemism for God-like for *my* next OPR, I'd be all set.

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### Random Notes

Need more help? How about some negative examples? The following lines are rumored to be from actual U.S. Military Officer Efficiency Reports (OERs) (the predecessors of today's OPRs). I can't vouch for their authenticity, but I can say I've met some guys (DUH!) and gals who would be accurately described by the following...

- Not the sharpest knife in the drawer.
- Got into the gene pool while the lifeguard wasn't watching.
- A room temperature IQ.
- A gross ignoramus -- 144 times worse than an ordinary ignoramus.
- A prime candidate for natural *de*-selection.
- Bright as Alaska in December.
- Gates are down, the lights are flashing, but the train isn't coming.
- So dense, light bends around him.
- If brains were taxed, he'd get a rebate.
- If he were any more stupid, he'd have to be watered twice a week.
- Was left on the Tilt-A-Whirl a bit too long as a baby.
- Wheel is turning, but the hamster is dead.
- Unable to comprehend the concept of manned flight.  
*and my personal favorite...*
- Got a full 6-pack, but lacks the plastic thingy to hold it all together.

And if that wasn't enough, the following lines were reported to be actual excerpts from Royal Navy and Marines officer fitness reports...

- His men would follow him anywhere, but only out of curiosity.
- I would not breed from this officer.
- He has carried out each and every one of his duties to his entire satisfaction.
- He would be out of his depth in a car park puddle.
- This young lady has delusions of adequacy.
- Since my last report he has reached rock bottom, and has started to dig.
- She sets low personal standards and then consistently fails to achieve them.
- He has the wisdom of youth, and the energy of old age.
- Works well when under constant supervision and cornered like a rat in a trap.
- This man is depriving a village somewhere of an idiot.

*T he*

*E n d*